

# CHANDAMAMA

APRIL 1986

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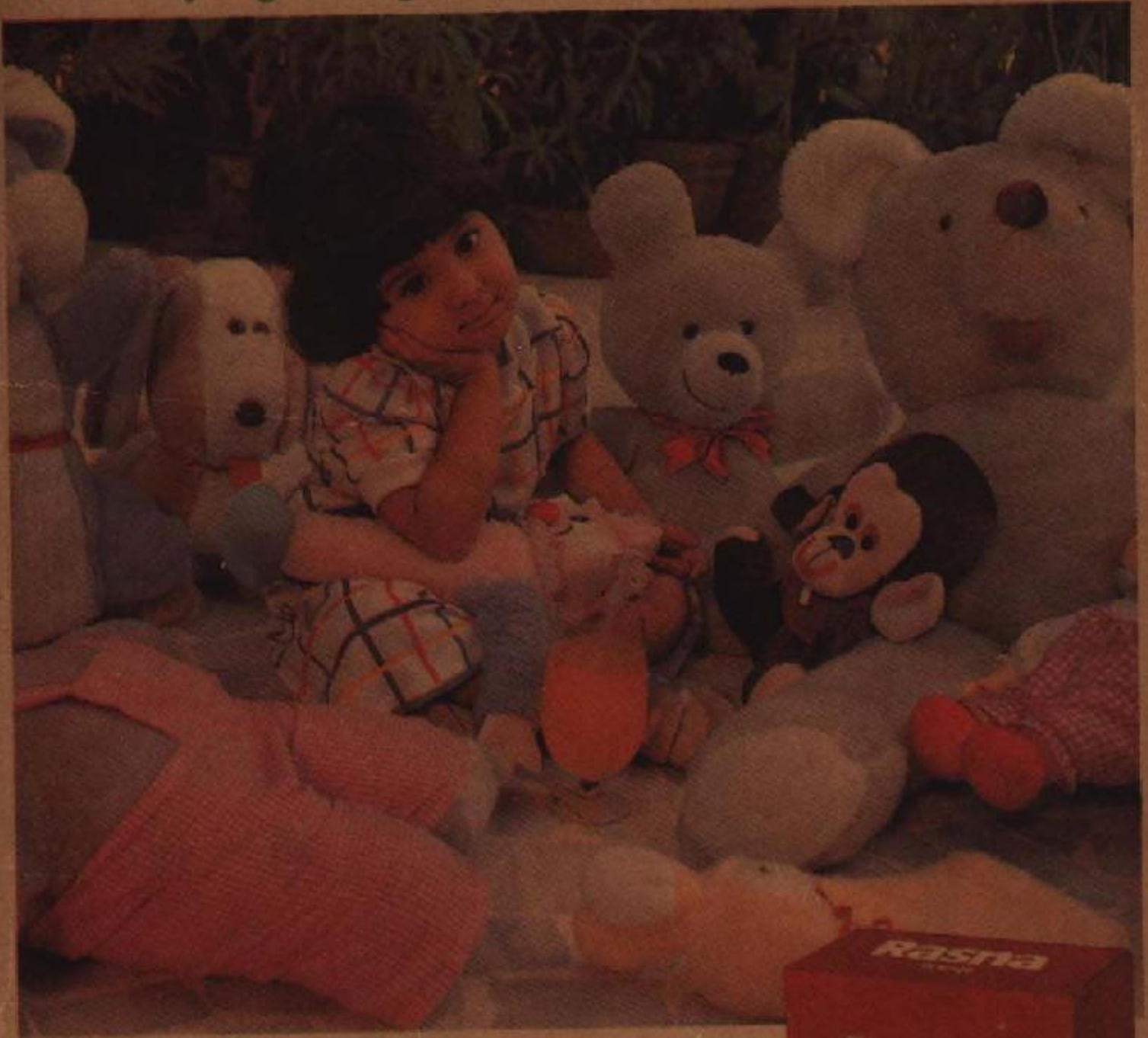


Turn to Page 11  
for 'STORY OF  
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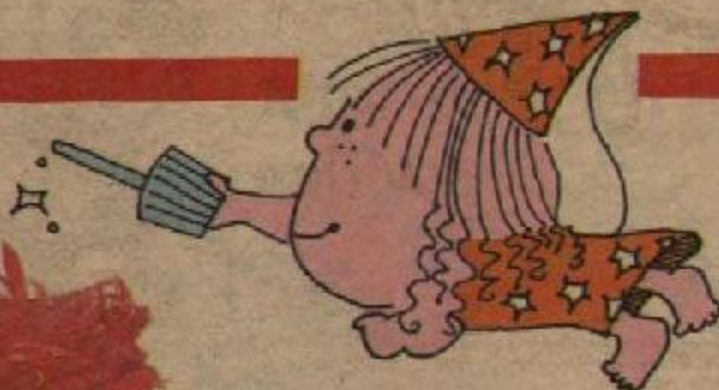


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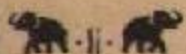
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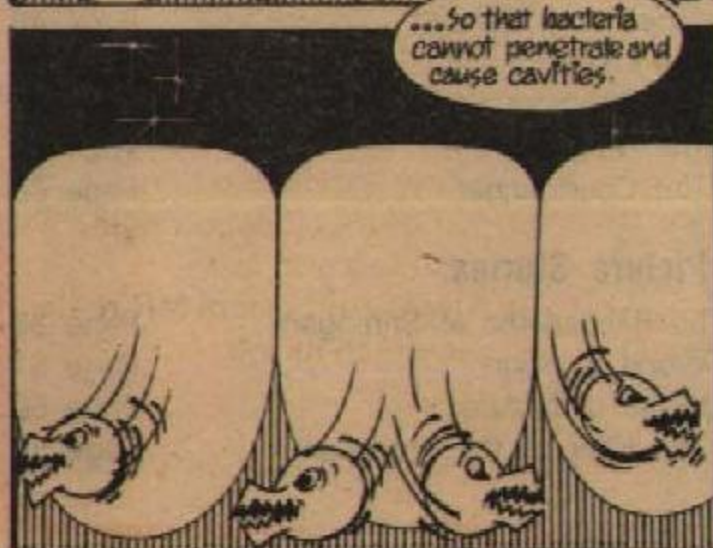
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### Thoughts to be Treasured

The more efficient a force is, the more silent and the more subtle it is.

—Mahatma Gandhi.

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**AND Newsflash, Did You Know, Let Us Know and More**





# CHANDAMAMA

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

Founder: CHAKRAPANI

## MANY OPPORTUNITIES

Before India became independent, there were only about a dozen dependable institutions in this vast country of ours which imparted lessons in classical dances. Today, every city of India has about a dozen such institutions. The number of gurus teaching classical music in pre-independent India was also very small. There are so many gifted teachers today. In those days students were content with the minimum opportunity available to them for prosecuting their studies; there was hardly any question of their going on a strike demanding greater facilities for library, reading room, sports activities, etc.

'We have all this today. The question is, how keen and sincere we are to put them to proper use. Many teachers are of the opinion that our young ones can progress much more, enjoy their own intellectual gifts much more, if they made judicious use of the opportunities available to them.



तावद् भयस्य भेतव्यं यावद् भयमनागतम् ।

आगतं च भयं वीक्ष्य नरः कुर्याद् यथोचितम् ॥


*Tāvad bhayasya bhetavyam yāvad bhayamanāgatam  
Āgatam ca bhayam vīkṣya naraḥ kuryād yathocitam*

Fear the danger as long as it has not arrived, but once it has come, one ought to do the needful (to come out of the situation without fearing it any longer).

*The Hitopadeshah*







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# NEWS FLASH

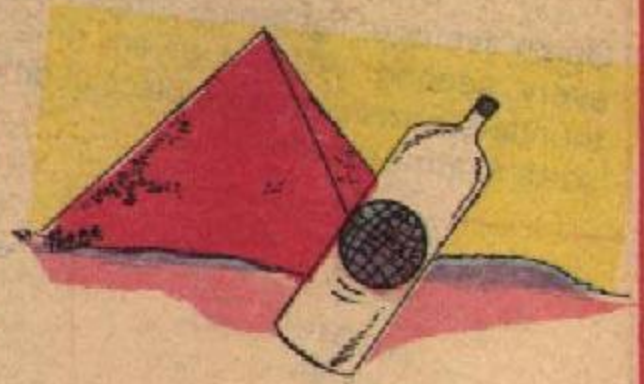


## Taj Mahal in Florida

An American named Donald Soldini is going to duplicate the Taj Mahal, the fabled Indian Monument, in Florida, at a fabulous cost, of course. "In Agra it could be seen by a handful of Americans yearly," he says. "But in Florida it will be viewed by millions every year."

## The Air of the Era of Pyramid

Scientists are about to collect bottles of air lying trapped in a pit at the foot of the great pyramid of Cheops for 4,600 years. They will analyse the air to learn about the earth's atmosphere and find out how the ancient Egyptians preserved their possessions for thousands of years.



## Women Only

A factory which will run by women only is to be set up in Saudi Arabia. It is because men and women are forbidden to work together in that country.

## Street Children

According to an estimate by the UNICEF, there are 100 million children in the world who live on the streets. They have no houses.





# DID YOU KNOW?



Calama, a town in Chile, has never experienced rain.

On an average, lightening strikes the earth 100 times every second. At any given time there are 1800 thunderstorms are taking place in different parts of the earth's atmosphere.



More than 100 million comets revolve around the sun.

William Shakespeare had red hair.



Ostrich feather fans were used by the Pharoah.

Tutankhamun was found intact in his tomb after 3000 years.





# RAMA



—By Manoj Das

(Prince Rama and his younger brother Lakshmana were led by Sage Viswamitra to the palace of King Janaka of Mithila. Janaka was the custodian of a bow which once belonged to Lord Siva. The king had decided that only he who can wield the bow shall be considered eligible to marry his daughter Sita. Nobody had succeeded in fulfilling the condition)

## RAMA MEETS THE OLDER RAMA

**K**ing Janaka who had great respect for King Dasaratha of Ayodhya and his glorious dynasty, extended a warm welcome to the sage and the princes. In no time the two young guests won his heart. And how much he wished that Rama won his daughter's hand in marriage! But when he re-

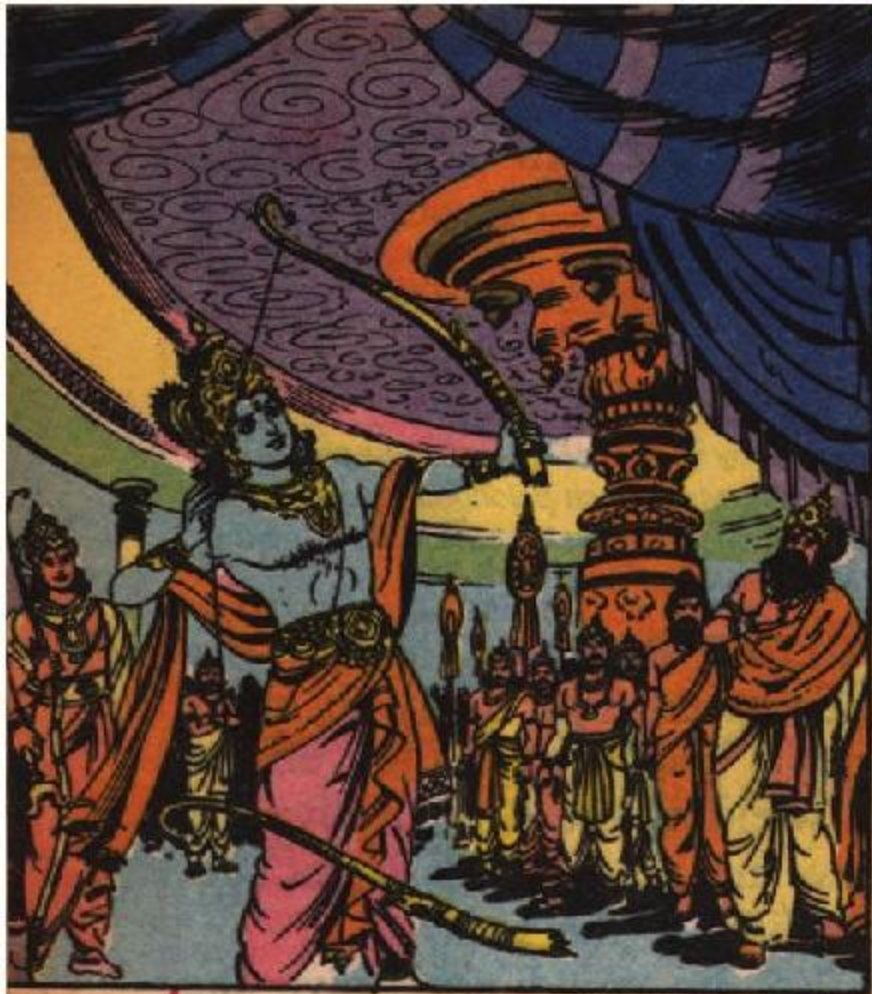
membered how badly so many others had fared in their efforts at wielding the Bow of Siva, he gave up all hope of Rama succeeding at the task.

Yet he could not waive the condition once he had decided upon it on oath!

"O Good King, won't you let the princes have a glimpse of the







blessed Bow of Siva?" suggested Sage Viswamitra.

"With great pleasure, O Master."

At a signal from the king, his attendants brought the huge wheeled case containing the bow rolling into the court. Curious inmates of the palace crowded the balconies. The adventures of Rama, his spectacular success in vanquishing the demons, had already become the talk of Mithila as of other neighbouring kingdoms. Will Rama dare to try his hand at the bow? They wondered.

As soon as the weapon was uncovered, a smile played on

Rama's face. Evidently he liked the majestic appearance of the bow. And he left nobody in any doubt regarding his readiness to handle it. In fact, he did not seem to remember that a score of proud princes had bowed out of the hall, unable to lift the bow!

King Janaka and his courtiers and the inmates of the palace looked on in utter disbelief as Rama quietly picked up the bow in his left hand. They were the very people who had been witnesses to prince after prince, looking much more strong and stout, failing to move the weapon even when by an inch, trying with both their hands.

Rama bent the bow. Perhaps he wished to examine its plasticity before shooting with it. Did he give a pull that was too strong for the bow? It snapped, producing a terrific sound.

All stood thunderstruck. But only for a moment. Someone from the gathering of courtiers cheered the unexpected event. At once all joined him. Cheers were accompanied by applause.

King Janaka had not felt so happy for many years as he felt then. He embraced Rama who was enthusiastically greeted by



all the others.

"O Sage, you know the cause of my joy. Now, you must do the needful to see that my joy becomes permanent. Rama should agree to marry my daughter and King Dasaratha's consent should be obtained for solemnising the marriage," Janaka told Viswamitra.

Things moved fast. Emissaries were despatched to Ayodhya. King Dasaratha welcomed the proposal and himself came to Mithila with his guru, Sage Vasishta, and his other two sons, Bharata and Shatrughna, and many more people.

Apart from Sita, who was Mother Earth's gift to Janaka,

the king had a daughter named Urmila. The sages advised her marriage with Lakshman. It was also proposed that the two nieces of Janaka be married to Bharata and Shatrughna. It thus became a grand affair—four Videha princesses marrying four Ikshvaku princes. The bond between the two most celebrated dynasties of the time became stronger than ever.

After the ceremonies Dasaratha's party set out for Ayodhya. To his surprise, the king observed on the way that coveys of birds tittered in panic on tree-tops. "Why this bad omen, sir?" he asked Vasishta.

"Even if something unwanted





is to happen, its effect will not be lasting, for, don't you see how the deer are circling those very trees with panicky birds? That is a good sign," said Vasishtha.

Suddenly some well-wishers came rushing to Dasaratha and whispered to him that the great sage Parasurama, angry and agitated, was approaching them. Before the king could think of any cause for Parasurama's excitement, the sage, looking like a flame of fire, stood before them.

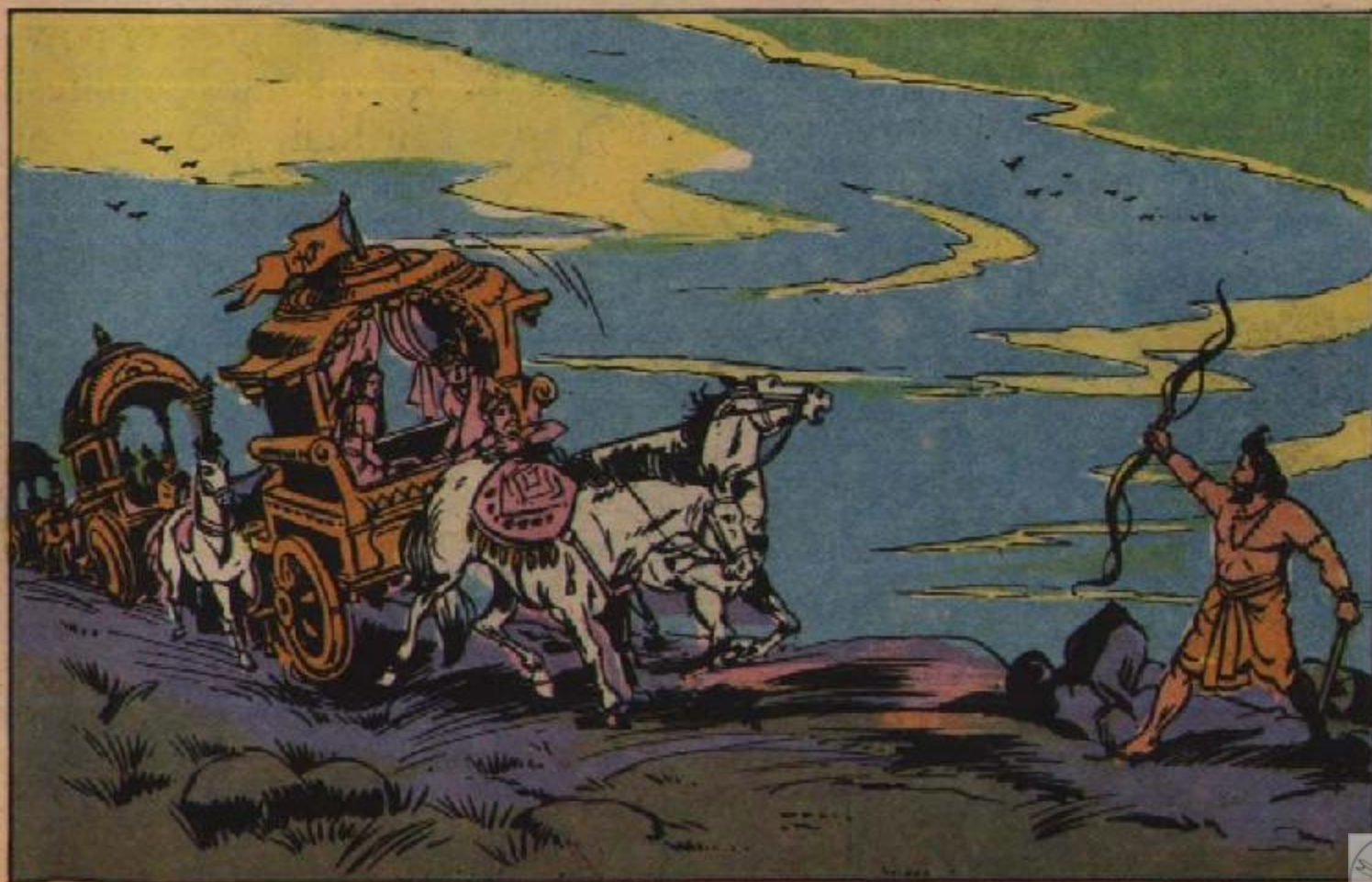
He fixed his gaze on Rama and said rudely, "I understand that you had the audacity to break the Bow of Siva. I will

like to test your power. Here is yet another bow—the Bow of Vishnu. Try to use it. If you succeed, I'll challenge you to a combat with me."

While Dasaratha was anxious to avoid any encounter with Parasurama who had brought death to numerous proud princes, Rama quietly received Parasurama's bow. Holding it with ease, he fixed an arrow to it and smilingly looked at Parasurama.

Parasurama was found trembling with wonder. He had never thought that Rama would be able even to lift his bow. He stood speechless.

"O Sage, now that I have





fixed the arrow to your bow, I must discharge it. But what should be my target? I'm not willing to aim it at you. What then do I destroy? Should I destroy your power of movement?"

Needless to say, the bow and arrow were not merely physical objects; they had supernatural powers. They could destroy not only visible objects, but also things invisible.

His voice marked with humility, Parasurama said, "Don't destroy my power of movement or speed, for I propose to retire to Mahendragiri, the mountain far from the world of men. Only a speed swift as the mind can carry me there. But since you must aim at something, let it be my occult powers. I do not need them any more. My only object

in life now is to become one with the Divine."

Rama shot the arrow that disappeared in the horizon. Parasurama blessed him and went away.

Only a few understood the significance of the encounter. Parasurama himself, like Rama, incarnated the powers of Vishnu. He had used his powers to destroy hordes of Kshatriyas, the princely class, that had grown tyrannical. Parasurama's role in the world was now over, after the annihilation of those mad with power. Rama was the personification of powers that were superior to Parasurama's. Parasurama acknowledged this. He knew that even greater powers of the Divine must manifest for the spiritual progress of man.

*To Continue*





## KING CHOLA

**K**ing Chola of Kanchipuram was a devotee of Vishnu. On an auspicious day he entered the temple with flowers made of gold and garlands of jewels.

He found that a poor man named Vishnudas had already decorated the image with flowers and Tulsi leaves.

"How dare you bedeck the Lord with this ordinary stuff on this very special day!" the king shouted at Vishnudas.

Vishnudas went out of the temple in tears. He went to a smaller temple that was lying deserted. He installed an image of Vishnu and began offering obeisance to the Lord.

The king, after worshipping the deity, returned to his palace. For days together thereafter he devoted his time to conducting a ceremony in honour of Vishnu. Arms were distributed in huge quantities; yajnas were performed and hymns were chanted continuously. Vishnudas, on the other hand, used to beg from house to house in the morning every day. He cooked the rice which he received from householders and then sat in meditation before eating his food. One day he found the food missing by the time he had finished his meditation. The same thing happened





the next day and it went on happening day after day, unable to meditate, he just stood leaning against the wall keeping his eyes shut. He heard someone's footsteps. Opening his eyes slightly he saw a thief entering the temple and stealing his food. The thief looked so emaciated and famished that Vishnudas, took pity on him.

But, the thief coming to know that he had been found out, fled the temple. Vishnudas ran behind him holding the rice and shouting at him asking him to receive it. The stranger tumbled on the road and fainted. Vishnudas sat by his side and sprinkled water on him. After a while the stranger opened his eyes. Instantly Vishnudas saw in his eyes the Lord Himself. There was a flash of light and the stranger turned into Lord Vish-

nu. From some distance a sage saw that Vishnu took Vishnudas into His embrace and both disappeared.

When King Chola heard this incident from the sage, he became very sad. "What is the use of my performing all these ceremonies when poor Vishnudas found the Lord without doing anything?" wondered the king. He made his nephew the king. He made a fire and prepared to jump into it. It is then that Vishnu appeared and took him into His embrace. Both the King and Vishnudas were his devotees and both worshipped Him in their own ways. But the king had some pride in him. He realised the Lord after that pride had gone.

Since that time, in his dynasty it is always the nephew who succeeded the king.







## THE WIZARD'S MAGIC

**S**uresh had all the reasons to be happy. He had just got a good job at the local office of the Zamindar. What was much more, he was engaged to Lakshmi, daughter of the village chief.

Lakshmi was not only beautiful, but also a girl of many fine qualities. Suresh had lost his parents. He was eagerly waiting for the day when Lakshmi would come over to his house and adorn it.

Suresh had just returned from his office after a day's hard work when a maid-servant from Lakshmi's house met him and said in a whisper, "Babu, Lakshmi would like to speak to you privately. She is waiting outside the Siva temple."

Suresh was thrilled. He did not lose even a minute. He walked as fast as he could to-

wards the temple.

Lakshmi was there at a lonely spot. But a look at her convinced Suresh that something was amiss. On sighting Suresh she burst into tears.

"Everything has changed. Life is going to be hell for me. Father has decided to call off my proposed marriage with you. He wants me to marry the son of a wealthy merchant, a friend of his, whom he met this morning after many years," Lakshmi said between sobs.

"But that is impossible! Wasn't he bound by his word of honour?"

Lakshmi turned and went away, still weeping.

Anger and despair overpowered Suresh. He hardly knew when he walked into the forest. He was totally lost in thought.

"Stop! What business have





you got in this forbidden area at this hour of the night? Are you a wizard yourself?"

Suresh came to his senses at this challenge. He saw himself face to face with two young men. They belonged to a tribe dreaded by the people of the villages outside the forest.

"I don't mind being killed by you or any wild beast. I'm in deep distress," said Suresh in all sincerity.

"It is not for us to kill you or leave you. You have entered the wizard's area. I'm surprised how you were not stopped by his spirits. Anyway, we should lead you to him," said the two tribal young men.

Suresh now remembered that he had heard some strange yells and shrieks a little while ago and had seen some shadow dancing before him. He was too absorbed in his own thoughts to take note of them.

"There. Go over to that hut," the two young men gave a push to Suresh, showing him a hut behind a fire.

Suresh slowly approached the hut.

"What is your problem? It must be very grave to let you pass through my fearful



guards," said a dwarfish old man, bent with age, in a nasal tone.

Suresh bowed to him and narrated his woes in one breath.

The wizard nodded and threw his skinny fingers into the fire and picked up a burning chunk of wood. Fire did not seem to affect him!

"Ask your would-be wife to eat this without questions!"

"So, she is going to be my wife, after all, is that right?" Suresh asked eagerly.

"Begone!"

The wizard disappeared into his dark hut.

Suresh ran out of the forest in a few bounds. He tiptoed his





way into the compound of Lakshmi's house. Then he tapped the window of her room.

Lakshmi was awake. She opened the window. In the moonlight Suresh saw her face swollen with sorrow.

"Don't ask me any questions. Just chew and gulp this charcoal," said Suresh.

Lakshmi received the charcoal with respect and chewed and swallowed it.

"Now go to bed. I have a feeling that something good shall come out of it, though I can't think of anything!" said Suresh.

The merchant and his wife

arrived the very next day for the betrothal ceremony. But what is this surprise that awaited them? Lakshmi had changed into an ugly girl!

"My friend, what business had you to play a trick on me? You passed on some other girl as your daughter yesterday!" complained the merchant.

Lakshmi's father had no answer. He stood speechless. Lakshmi's mother wailed, looking at her daughter.

"It is not possible for me to take this girl home." The merchant gave out his decision loudly and left in a huff.

"What kind of disease is this





that reduced my charming daughter to this shape?" Lakshmi's father asked the village physician.

"I've never known any such thing during fifty years of my practice, nor have I read anything about such a disease in any book of Ayurveda," confessed the physician.

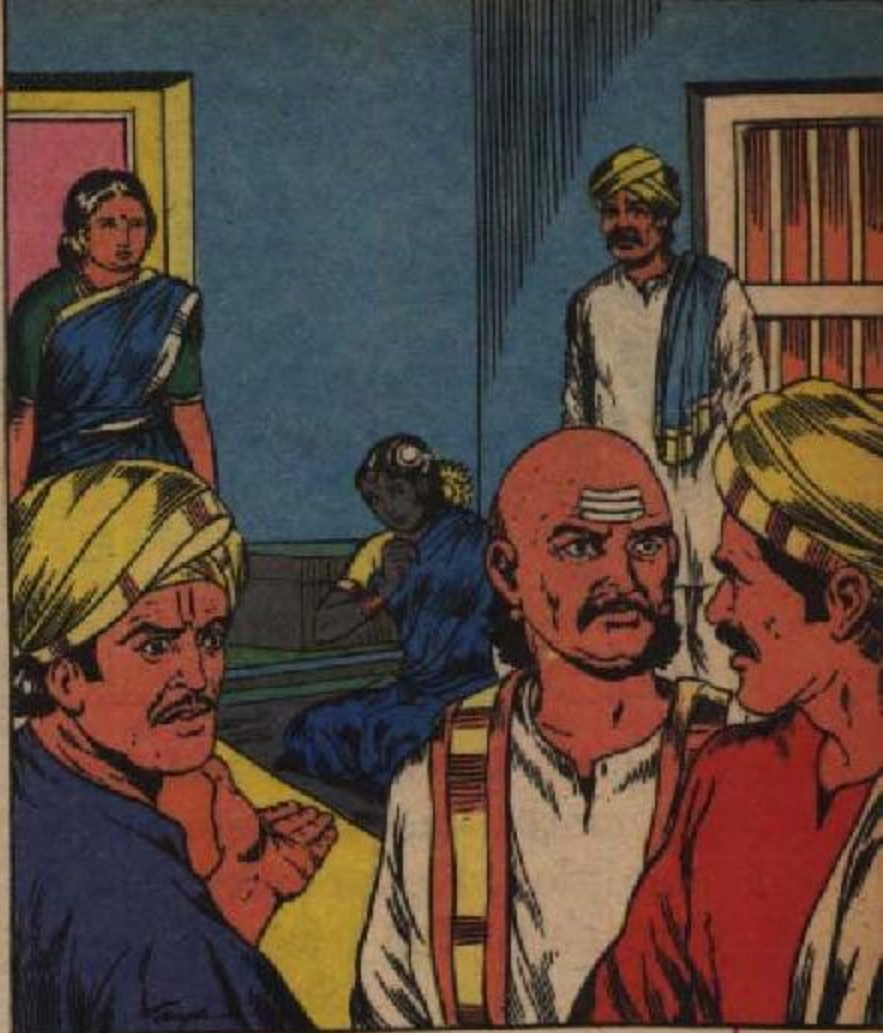
"Who will marry my daughter now?" Lakshmi's father and threw this question as if to the wide world.

"Why, sir, am I not there?" politely asked Suresh when he heard of the village chief's anguish.

"My son! Can you be that noble? Have I not betrayed your faith?" asked Lakshmi's father, in tears.

"Well, sir. I don't look at the situation from that angle. As a fond father you were eager to find out the best possible match for your daughter. It is true that you ignored your daughter's sentiment and mine too. But let's forget about that," said Suresh. Lakshmi's father hugged him.

A little later Lakshmi met Suresh. She was weeping again. "How can you marry such an ugly girl as I am now?"



"Lakshmi, I'm to marry you. Your body is not the whole of you! It is your nature, your character that I value most. In any case, I am going to do something about it."

The same evening Suresh entered the forest and met the wizard again. "Sir, my agony is over. The merchant has backed out. Now, kindly restore Lakshmi to her old form," said Suresh humbly.

"Why should I, you fool? Go and marry her as she is, if you really love her!" shouted the wizard.

"Very good, sir. I don't mind doing that. But I have another





request. Lakshmi is feeling shy to marry me in her present condition. Please make me ugly enough so that I can be a good match for her. She won't feel bad any more," said Suresh.

The wizard laughed. It sounded like a cracker. "You are a good lover indeed! Come on. Here is a fruit. Let Lakshmi eat

this and all will be well with her once again."

Indeed, all was more than well, it appeared. Lakshmi looked brighter than ever after eating the fruit. Maybe, it was because of her inner happiness.

Their marriage was celebrated on the earliest auspicious day.

## WONDER WITH COLOURS





## THE RIDER WHO DID NOT RETURN

**K**ing Ratnadev of Jaisagar was extremely fond of good horses. His stable was a sight for all horse-lovers. Along with good horses, he patronised horse-tamers and horsemen. He sent spies to different kingdoms to locate the best horsemen. Upon the information received from the spies, he sent his emissaries to recruit such horsemen to his service. He paid them high salaries. He did not think much of the horsemen of his own kingdom, Jaisagar.

One day a spy came running to the king. Said he, "My lord, I've just met a horseman who is on his way to meet the king of Vaishali. He can gallop for two days and nights at a stretch. But I know that he will be at Vishnupur for a week to attend his friend's marriage, before proceeding to the capital of Vaishali."

The king was excited. "This is the kind of horseman I must have in my employment—one who can ride for two days and





nights at a stretch!" he exclaimed.

He then asked his minister to send a rider forthwith to Vishnupur, a town in Vaishali, to bring the horseman to Jaisagar.

The minister wanted to say something, but the king made a gesture of impatience and said, "Please don't waste time. Send for the horseman immediately. This is my order. Offer him a salary of a hundred gold coins a month."

The minister went away to do the needful.

On the seventh day the horseman from Vishnupur arrived. He had accepted King Ratnadev's offer. The king was very happy to see him. He was even happier to know that the king of Vaishali desired to have him in

his service, but by the time the king of Vaishali's emissary met the horseman, he had already accepted King Ratnadev's offer.

"Minister, please give a reward to the fellow who went to Vishnupur," said the king.

"My lord," said the minister, "our horseman, in order to reach Vishnupur quickly, rode for three days and nights at a stretch. The king of Vaishali was extremely pleased at his performance. He has retained him in his service, paying him a higher salary."

King Ratnadev received a shock. He realised how careless he had been of his own people—some of them more talented than the employees recruited from other lands.





## TWO VOICES

Once a group of young travellers and a hermit were crossing a river by boat.

Matted long hair crowned the hermit's head. His beard, long and grey, flowed down to his naval hiding his bare chest. A garland of *Rudraksha* beads adorned his neck. He had smeared his body with holy ash.

The river was in spate and one could not see the other shore.

"What are you hiding in your matted hair, holy man?" asked a young man.

The other members of his party looked amused.

The hermit smiled, but didn't utter a word.

"Food for all?" asked the young fellow again. The other travellers giggled.

"Must be the egg of a horse!" observed another young man, inspiring his friends to a roaring laughter.

The hermit smiled and remained silent.

"Well Sadhu Baba, how do you feel in summer and winter without even a shirt to cover







yourself? You are thick-skinned, aren't you?" asked another young man.

"If dogs and cats can brave the weather, why not a sadhu?" said yet another.

The sadhu smiled and continued his silence.

The hermit's silence provoked the other travellers to contribute to the mischief.

"Sadhu Baba, can you swallow swords?" asked one.

"Can you create bread out of clay?" asked another.

"Can you eat fire?" asked another.

"No! No! No! Had he such powers, he would have conjured

up at least a shirt for himself," replied a young fellow showing all his teeth.

The travellers roared with laughter. The hermit didn't bother to open his mouth. He only smiled.

"This beggar must be dumb. Or, is he deaf? Maybe he is both!"

"We must find out," suggested the leading member of the gang.

Meanwhile the sun was about to set. The hermit closed his eyes in meditation.

One of the young men pinched the hermit's back, expecting a yell from him. But the hermit showed no sign of pain.

Another traveller tickled the hermit expecting to see him twist and turn. But, undisturbed, the hermit continued his meditation.

"Has he turned himself into a stone?" The chief mischief-maker began showering blows on the hermit's back.

All of a sudden the sky turned murky. Clouds gathered rapidly. Flashes of lightning split the clouds and thunders rumbled.

"O hermit! Nod your consent and we will sink the boat. These





evil ones deserve to be drowned. You'll be safe."

The hermit opened his eyes. The travellers stood dumb, trembling with fright.

The voice from the sky continued: "Endless endurance is cowardice, O holy man! Say 'yes' and we will teach your tormentors a lesson."

The travellers huddled close to one another. They looked at the hermit with fear and prayer.

The hermit smiled and looked at them with perfect peace in his eyes. "Do not be afraid, boys. The voice you heard is not the voice of God. It must be that of the elements of Nature. As long as I am with you no harm can befall you. Continue with your mirth and I will continue with my meditation."

The clouds disappeared. The sun had already set, but the twilight was bright enough to reveal the shore.

"Well done, hermit, well done my son," came another voice from the bright sky.

The sadhu stood up, his face glowing with joy.

"Listen! Listen! It's God who is speaking now," the hermit told the travellers.

The travellers blinked at the sky and at the hermit.

"They can't hear me and don't you bother on that account," the voice said once again.

The boat reached the shore. The travellers fell at the hermit's feet, weeping and praying for his pardon.

—Retold by P. Raja.





## THE PHYSICIAN'S SECRET

Ram Sharma was a well-known physician. He had for his assistant his son-in-law, Ravi.

One day Ravi told his wife Kusum, "I have learnt whatever I can from your illustrious father. He has passed on his experience to me with great affection and kindness. But he does not tell me the significance of one thing. Before handing over the medicine to his patients, he inquires of them the food they had eaten during the previous three or four days. Once or twice I asked him how that helps him. But he smiled and kept quiet."

Kusum giggled. "My father won't like to tell you the significance of his query about the patient's food habit. It is because this has nothing to do with the medicine he gives to the patients," she said.

"Then what does his query mean?" asked Ravi, a bit puzzled.

"From the nature of the dishes the patient eats my father gets an idea about his financial status. He decides how much money he should charge the patient for the medicine he was giving him," Kusum explained.







## GOD DID KNOCK!

**R**amesh returned to his village after completing his studies in Ayurveda. He began his practice as a physician. His father, Shankar Sharma, a retired teacher, was very happy.

Days passed. Ramesh did not seem to be happy with his work.

"I was a fool to study medicine. This will not bring me enough money," one day he said with great irritation.

"Ramesh, I have observed that you have never been happy with your work. I'm afraid, your attitude to work is not correct," said his father.

"What do you mean?" asked Ramesh.

"I'll tell you if you don't mind. There are two professions in the world which are quite different from all other professions. One is the profession of the teacher, the other is that of

the doctor. One cannot truly teach unless one does it with love; one cannot truly care for a patient unless one treats with sincerity. I see that you care more for money than for the patient," Shankar Sharma said politely.

"Why should I labour if not for money?"

"In your profession, money will come when your sincerity in treating your patient is proved, not otherwise. And, even after more and more money comes, you must pay equal attention to all your patients. Some will be able to pay you much; some will not be able to pay you at all," said Shankar Sharma.

"Hm!" responded Ramesh. It is not possible to say whether he appreciated his father's advice or not.

Next day, at noon Shankar



Sharma saw a poor man fainting on the road in front of their house. He ran towards him and brought him to the verandah. The man was unable to speak. Shankar Sharma sprinkled water on his face. The man soon came to his senses.

"Thank you very much, sir. I will never forget your kindness," said the poor man.

"Are you hungry? Can I give you some food?"

"Thanks, Sir, but I'm not hungry. This is a disease with me. I swoon away for a few minutes almost every day. There are many patients who have fits as I have. But my symptoms are different. There is no cure for the kind of disease I have caught. It may endanger my life any day," said the poor man.

"My son is a good physician. Better I ask him to take up your case."

"It is most kind of you, sir. Several other physicians have failed to cure me, though in order to pay their fees I have sold whatever little property I had. Now I'm a beggar," lamented the man.

"You won't have to pay anything to my son. Don't you worry

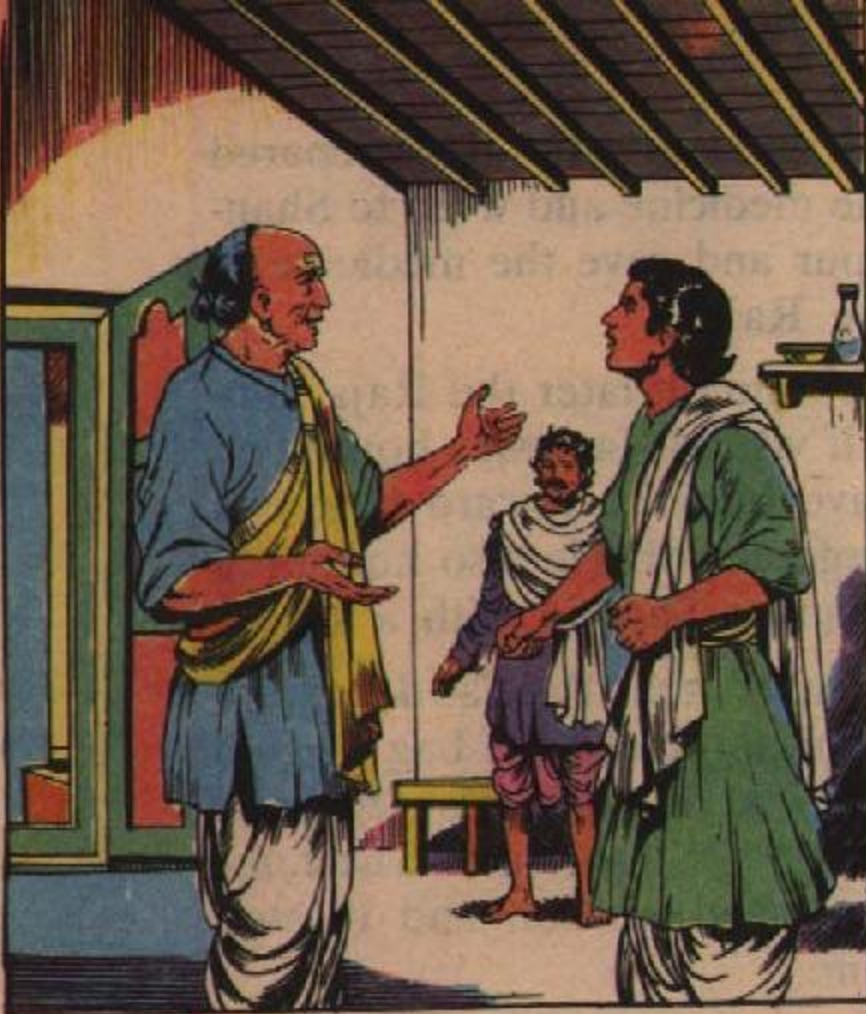


on that account," said Shankar Sharma.

He then went into his son's chamber and told him about the poor man. "Ramesh, sometimes God knocks on our door in disguise. Somehow I strongly feel that you should try to cure this man whom others have failed to cure," he told Ramesh.

"Let me see your God!" muttered Ramesh as he came out to the verandah. He heard the symptoms of the disease narrated by the man. He went into his chamber, followed by his father, and mixed three different powders and made four small packets of the mixture.





"Take one packet every week for four weeks. Let's see," he said gravely as he handed over the medicine to the poor man.

"I'm happy that you did him this favour," said Shankar Sharma after the poor man had left.

Ramesh laughed. "Do you believe that I gave him some medicine to cure him? Well, his is a rare disease. I do not know any cure for it," he confessed.

"But didn't you give him medicine?" asked Shankar Sharma, quite surprised.

"I did. That was only to please you."

Shankar Sharma fell silent. Suddenly the poor man

appeared one day, after two months. "How are you?" asked Shankar Sharma, rather differently.

The man smiled while tears drizzled in his eyes. "Sir, he said, "I do not know how to express my gratefulness to you and your great son. The fit has never recurred since my taking the very first dose. Now, instead of begging, I can work in a normal way".

Ramesh came out. The man touched his feet and thanked him profusely.

"Sir," he said, "I am in no position to pay you now, but I can tell you how to earn a thousand gold coins!"

Ramesh laughed. "A beggar can teach me how to earn a thousand gold coins, eh? Well, man, why don't you earn it yourself?" Ramesh asked with derision.

"Only a physician like you can earn that amount. Look here, sir, the Raja of Shantipur is suffering from the same disease from which I suffered. Since the known physicians have failed to cure him, he has announced that anybody who can cure him will receive a thousand gold coins. Sir, please



proceed to Shantipur and receive the reward!"

After the man left, Shankar Sharma asked his son enthusiastically, "Had I not said that good fortune comes to one who is sincere?"

"But I was not sincere, father, I cannot remember what are the powders I mixed! I just wanted to get rid of the man!" said Ramesh, on the verge of tears.

Shankar Sharma was shocked. But he soon smiled and said, "My son, I remember. I was observing you preparing the mixture. I was praising you silently telling myself how quickly you could remember that powders from the third jar in the first row and sixth jar in the second row and tenth jar in the third row must be mixed to prepare the right medicine!"

Ramesh felt ashamed of him-

self and happy too. He prepared the medicine and went to Shantipur and gave the medicine to the Raja.

A month later the Raja himself visited Ramesh's house and gave him the reward before a large crowd. He also honoured Shankar Sharma with a shawl.

After the Raja's departure Ramesh placed the bag of gold coins at his father's feet and wept. Shankar Sharma embraced his son and blessed him.

Ramesh became a different man. He treated his patients with great sincerity. The Raja's case had already made him famous. He was in great demand. And he did justice to his popularity. "God did knock on my door—in the disguise of my father!" he told himself.





## THE DISTURBING DIAMOND

**B**isham, the jeweller and his wife Shyama were out on a pilgrimage. They had taken a vow that while on the pilgrimage they will not think either of their property or of their business or of anything else that kept them engaged at home. All their thoughts must concentrate on God.

In those days pilgrims had to cover long distances by foot and occasionally by bullock carts or boats. Once out on a pilgrimage, one could be away from home for any length of time from three months to three

years!

Bisham and Shyama were relaxing in a grove on a river. Beyond the grove was a range of hills. Bisham had heard of those since long. Explorers were known to have found pieces of diamond amidst the rocks there.

While Shyama lay down under a bushy tree, Bisham went to the river for a bath. Upon his return he saw his wife asleep. What is more, a bright object lay close to her right hand.

The object dazzled in the sunlight. It was not there when





he had left for the river. How did it come there? Bisham wondered. He picked it up and examined it. His guess proved correct. It was a piece of diamond!

Bisham kept brooding over it for a minute. Then he came to a decision. They must be truthful to the vow they had taken. They must not be tempted by wealth. So far as he was concerned, he knew that he had the self-control to forget the diamond. But he was not so sure of his wife. The best thing to do would be to hide it from her sight, he thought.

He dug a hole quickly and dropped the diamond into it and covered it with sand.

After some time they resumed their journey.

"I saw something lying near you when I returned from the

river," said Bisham to break the monotony of the journey.

"Did you? Are you speaking of a diamond?" asked Shyama.

Surprised, Bisham looked at her.

She said without any excitement, "An eagle flew in and settled overhead. I saw something falling from its beak. I looked at it and knew it to be a piece of diamond. But I was already feeling sleepy."

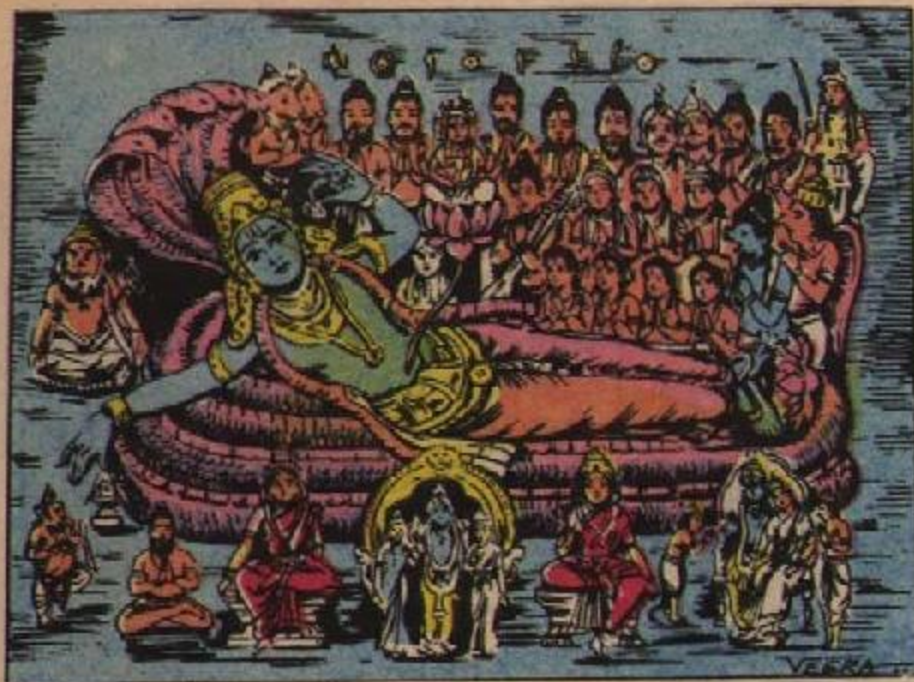
"Shyama did you not feel any urge to pick it up?" asked Bisham.

"Why should I? We are pilgrims looking for God's Grace and not for diamonds. We are not worthy pilgrims if the diamond were to appear in any way different from a piece of stone or clay," replied Shyama.

In silence Bisham developed a reverence for Shyama.







## TEMPLES OF INDIA

### SRI RANGANATHA AT SRIRANGAM

The great image of Vishnu in his reclining pose on the serpentine couch to be seen in the temple at Srirangam is believed to have come from Rama's palace at Ayodhya where it was worshipped by his ancestors.

When Rama returned to Ayodhya after rescuing Sita from Lanka, Vibhishana accompanied him. Rama found him greatly attracted towards the deity, Sri Ranganatha. He offered it to him.



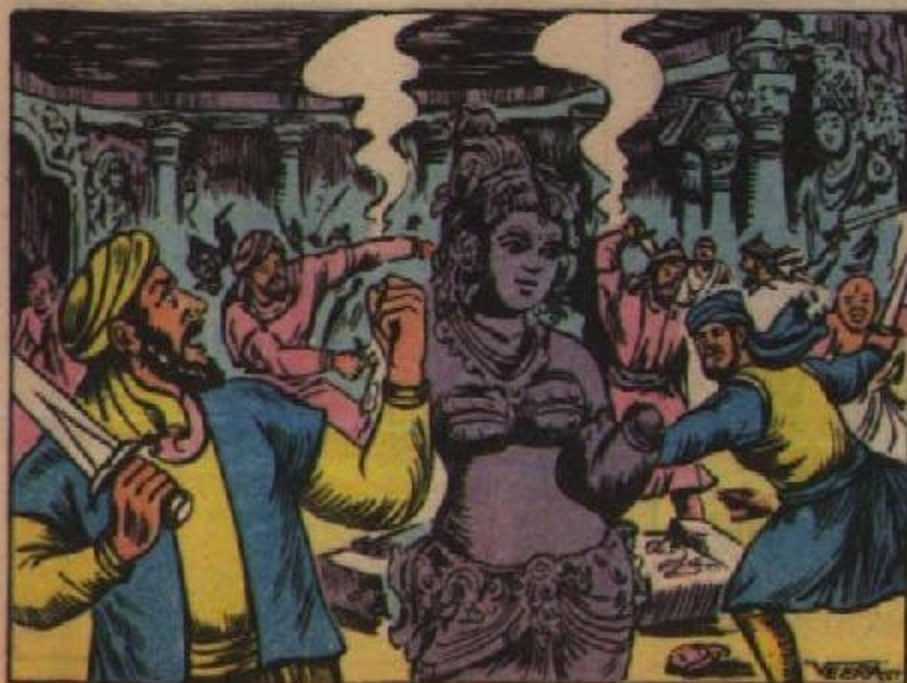
For some mystic reasons it was necessary for Vibhishana to carry the image to Lanka on his shoulder without stopping anywhere. However, while passing through Srirangam, he placed it on the ground and was unable to lift it again.





As Srirangam grew famous because of Sri Ranganatha's presence, it has been a place of pilgrimage for innumerable devotees through the ages. Among them was the great woman-sage Andal who, as the Lord's bride, got immersed in the deity.

The temple precincts became the site for numerous cultural and literary activities. It was here that the great Tamil sage-poet, Kamban, read out his version of the Ramayana for the first time.



The Temple was attacked by the army of the Sultans of Delhi several times during 12th and 16th centuries. Once a Sultan wanted to take away the deity, but the devotees had shifted the deity to Tirupati. The Sultan took away the movable idol of the deity.



Sage Ramanuja proceeded to meet the Sultan. Impressed by the sage's power, the Sultan did not object to his carrying the idol back to Srirangam. It was a triumph of faith and devotion over tyranny.

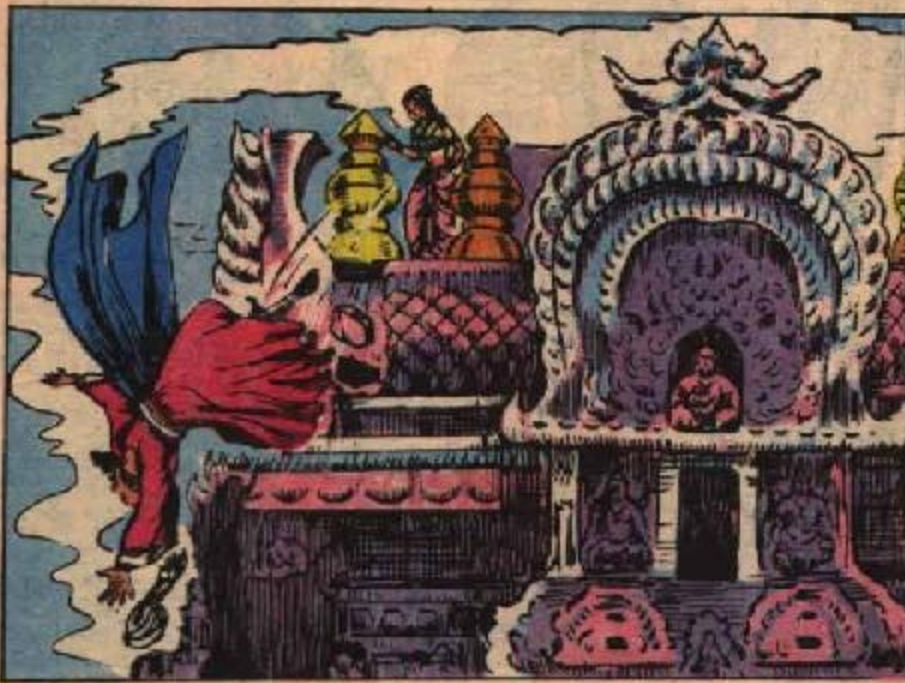


But something unexpected happened. The Sultan's daughter had fallen in love with the idol. She followed the cart carrying the deity all the way to Srirangam. In her memory some Muslim rites are incorporated in the temple functions.

Another time a devadasi, a dancing girl dedicated to the Lord, overheard a Sultan's general conspiring with his lieutenants to ransack and destroy the temple. The general was enamoured of the Devadasi.







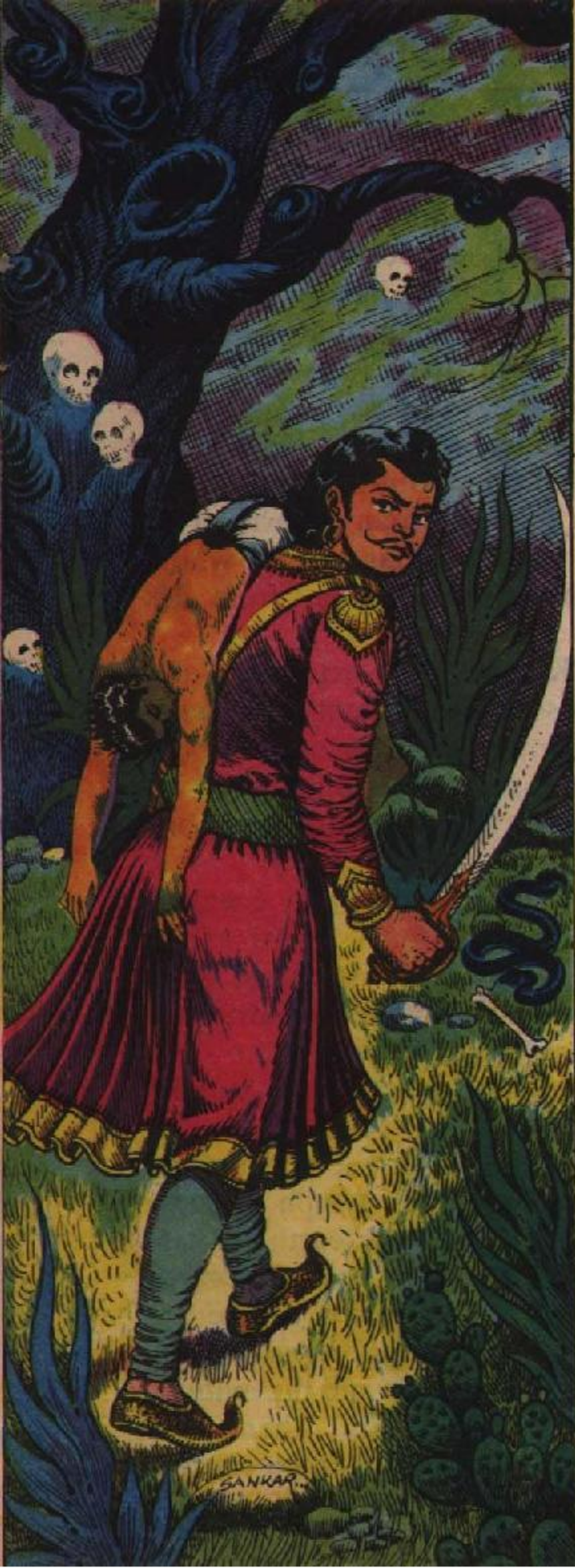
The dancing girl, under the pretext of showing a hidden treasure to the general, led him to the peak of a temple building. There was a loose slab of stone. The dancing girl risked her own life and enticed him onto it. The stone tumbled and he fell to his death.

The great temple with seven enclosures is a magnificent structure. Its thousandpillared Mandapam is a grand hall. The walls are richly sculptured. The Vimana is in the shape of Omkara.



The Vaikuntha Ekadasi is the most important festival held at Srirangam. Ekadasi Devi, an emanation of Yogmaya, had killed a demon called Mura. Hence those who observe the day become blessed by the Lord.





New Tales of the King  
Vikram and the Vampire

## THE NYMPH AND THE YOUNG MAN

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed him said, "O King, why are you taking such pains at this unearthly hour of the night? Are you sure that you will be able to make good use of any opportunity that comes out of your labours? There are people who let golden chances slip off their hands. Let me cite an example. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some re-





lief."

The Vampire went on: Not far from the city of Rudrapur lived a wealthy merchant. Once he suffered so much loss in his business that he almost went bankrupt. In despair he left for some unknown destination.

His only son Kumar found himself in a difficult condition. He did not know where his father was. At home his mother took to bed, struck by a serious ailment. His father had borrowed a huge amount of money from another merchant who now wanted his money back. He had a sister. Her marriage had been fixed with a prosper-

ous young man. A lot of money was needed for the ceremony. Kumar's mother had a good number of costly ornaments. Kumar could have sold them. But he thought that it will not be right to do so while his mother was sick.

So, he sold their lands for a good price. But before he could pay back the loan or perform his sister's marriage, the whole amount was stolen from his house.

Kumar was extremely depressed. He did not know what to do. In the evenings he spent his time alone on the riverbank, looking into the hazy forests.

It was a moonlit evening. Suddenly Kumar heard someone giggle. He turned and saw a beautiful damsel walking towards him.

"Who are you?" asked Kumar.

"I come from the world of the *gundharvas*, a nymph. I have been visiting the earth for last three evenings. To me the earth is a charming place. I love the flowers and the forests, the rivers and the hills and the animals and the birds. But whenever I look at you, my happiness dis-



appears. It is because you look so sad! What is the matter with you?" asked the nymph.

Kumar had not narrated his sorrows to anyone that far. Now he found a sympathetic listener in the nymph. He reported to her all that had happened to him.

"So, you need some wealth, am I right?" She disappeared in the mist. Kumar heard a splashing sound emanating from the river.

Kumar took time to convince himself that what he saw was true and not a halucination.

A minute later he heard another splashing sound. The damsel emerged from the mist, a bag in hand.

"Take this. Sell the jewels and resolve your problems. If you come here after three days at this time, I will be happy to meet you again," said the nymph.

Kumar looked into the bag. It contained jewels. He thanked the nymph.

"Don't forget to come. I cannot come to the human world again and again unless a human being strongly wishes me to come. That is the law," said the nymph before disappearing.



Next day Kumar went to the city and sold one of the jewels. He obtained enough money with which to pay back the loan and perform his sister's marriage. Servants whom he had discharged because he was unable to pay them were back in his household.

Three days later he reached the river-bank at the appointed time. Soon the nymph emerged from the mist and was happy to see Kumar in all smiles. After a moment she said, "Since my return to my world I have not been able to forget you even for a moment. I shall be delighted if you agree to marry me. That





will of course mean that you will live with me in the world of *gundharvas*. Occasionally we can visit the human world either in disguise or invisible to human beings."

Kumar gave a start at the proposal. "Well, won't you allow me some time to think over it?" he said.

"Look here, Kumar, I can take you with me right now, by casting a spell on you. But I won't like to do such a thing. You should decide to marry me of your free will. I will wait. Let us meet here after three days."

The nymph went away.

Kumar became very thought-

ful. It was difficult for him to forget the nymph. At the same time he could not think of having to leave his home, his own people and the human world and to go over to the world of the *gundharvas* for good!

He found his mother much better. The prosperity of the house had obviously made her happy.

Kumar sat down by his mother's side and told him how he had come out of the difficulties.

The mother grew pensive and said, "My son, you must get rid of the nymph. But you have to do so with great caution. If angry, she may do us great harm. I am sure, he can tell you how to tackle the situation."

"Mother, it is true that Dhar-amsingh is a prudent man. But I have lost my respect for him. He once proposed to marry his daughter to me. But when I went to seek his help at the most difficult time, he cleverly avoided me. He never came to us with any offer of sympathy or help in our misery!" said Kumar.

"My son, you are right. Dhar-amsingh is an opportunist. But he is clever. Now that our condi-



tion has changed, he will be keen about your marrying his daughter. That is why he will guide you in your bid to avoid the nymph without annoying her," explained the mother.

Kumar met Dharamsingh. The gentleman received him with a great show of love and listened to his problem. Then he thought over the matter and told him what he should do.

On the next meeting, Kumar told the nymph, "How can I go away with you while my mother lies sick? I am told that only Visalyakarani can cure her. But nobody knows where that plant is to be found!"

"I can find it. But the price I must pay for it is five hundred years from my life-span which is a thousand years. I don't mind doing so. Out of my remaining five hundred years, I will give you half, so that we can live more or less for the same length of time," said the nymph.

She fetched the rare plant the very next day. Using a bit of it Kumar's mother got fully cured of her ailment. Dharamsingh, who too was suffering from a chronic disease, used the herb and became a new man!

"Kumar, we have to get rid of

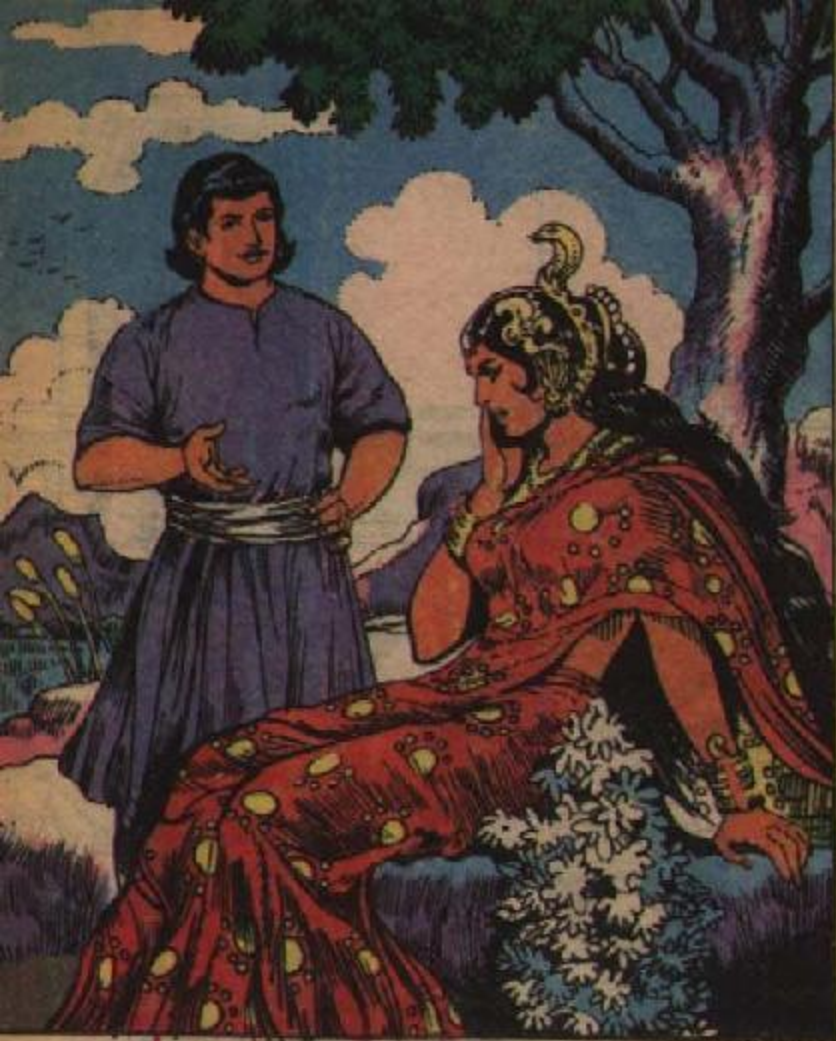


the nymph of hook or by crook. Tell her that you cannot go away unless your father returned home," Dharamsingh advised Kumar.

Kumar repeated the argument before the Nymph on their next meeting.

The nymph thought over the matter and, with a sigh, said, "It should be possible for me to induce the wish in your father, wherever he may be, to return home. But this interference in a human affair will shorten my life to a mere two hundred years. That is all right. I will do it for your sake and we both can live for a hundred years together,





sharing my life span.”

She then asked Kumar to meet her after another three days and disappeared.

Kumar's father was back home within two days. He was surprised and immensely happy to see his fortune changed. All the members of the family were equally happy to see him back.

Dharamsingh told Kumar on the eve of going to see the nymph, “Now tell the Nymph, that if she really loves you, she should come and live with you like a human wife; you won't like to go away to the world of the gundharvas.”

“Yes, my son, do so. Even if

she agrees to your proposal, we have nothing to fear from her decision. A nymph cannot live as a human being for long. She shall die,” said Kumar's mother.

When they met, Kumar said to the nymph whatever he had been asked to say.

This time the nymph thought even longer. Then, with a deep sigh, she said, “Very well. I will live as a human wife in your house although that will mean that I shall live only for two or three years. I am ready to forsake my own world for your sake.”

Suddenly Kumar caught the nymph's hands and said in a determined voice, “No, I won't let that happen. I am ready to depart with you to your world. Come on, let's not waste any more time here.”

The nymph looked delighted.

The vampire stopped for a moment and then demanded of King Vikram in a challenging tone, “O King, I'm a bit puzzled over Kumar's conduct. Why did he resolve to depart to the world of the gundharvas even after the nymph had accepted all his conditions? Did he suddenly turn mad? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite





your ability to satisfy my curiosity, your head should roll off your neck!"

King Vikram replied forthwith: "It is because of the nymph's readiness to comply with all his conditions that Kumar took the decision to go away with her. He felt convinced that the nymph's love for him was genuine. She was willing to make any sacrifice for his sake. On the other hand his own people, who did not hesitate to

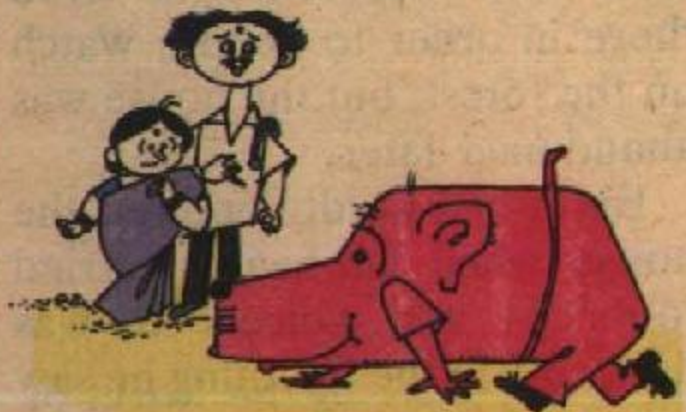
take all advantage of her love for him, had no sense of gratefulness for her. In fact, they were ready to deceive her. Kumar must have felt a disgust for the ways of the human beings. That is why he took an instant decision to go away with the nymph."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

A lady had left her husband in the care of a psychiatrist. She came to see him after a month.

"Doctor, have you cured my husband of his strange idea that he was a motor car?" she asked.

"Not yet, but we have made some progress. Instead of thinking he is a Rolls Royce, he now thinks that he is a Maruti," assured the doctor with a chuckle.







## AMIDST THE BANDITS

**B**him was returning to his village from the distant town. The sky was overcast with clouds. He thought of taking a short cut through the forest.

Bhim was a brave lad. He could be as swift as a leopard when the need arose. He could climb a tree like a squirrel and swim rivers like a fish.

He had been midway through the forest when rains broke out. He saw a deserted house and hurriedly entered it. The house once belonged to the local landlord. His representative lived there in order to keep a watch on the forest, but the house was abandoned later.

Bhim had hardly entered the house when he heard hurried footsteps and voices. It was dark, but in the lightning he saw some able bodied men rushing towards the house. He slipped

into an antechamber. He had no doubt in his mind that the intruders were bandits.

"We have to rest here tonight. Begin cooking," the leader of the gang told his people.

Bhim found them very prompt at work. Soon alluring vapour emerged from the pots. Bhim was already hungry. The fragrance of the delicacies made him even more hungry. He decided to partake of their food, somehow or the other.

The bandits had deposited their bales and bundles in an adjoining room. Bhim quietly picked up some clothes and changed into them and wore them in the style of the gang members. Now he looked exactly like one of them.

Now all of them excepting the leader and the cooks sat down



for dinner. Suddenly the leader said gravely, "four of us are busy serving you. There should be twenty-two more. But I count twenty three!" All felt surprised and they looked at one another. In the dim light of a lamp it was not possible to see any face distinctly.

"In no time I can catch the outsider who is mingling with us. Stop eating. I will be in the next room. Come in one by one. I will pierce each one with my pocket knife. From the reaction I can know who the outsider is!" said the chief and he entered the next room.

Bhim soon heard cries of 'Ah' coming from the next room. Somehow he had a feeling that the cry was not true. The chief would not inflict wounds on his own people so easily. When his turn came, he entered the room with perfect ease and confidence. As he went near the chief, the chief himself muttered, "Ah!" He was trying to make the outsider, whoever he may be, nervous. Seeing Bhim totally natural, he pushed him into the crowd of others and called for the next man.

"No. I could not find out the extra man. He must be very



clever. Now, go out, you all and come to me one by one. I will ask you about the code word we were to use tonight if we had gone out for our operation," announced the chief.

They all went out. Bhim had noticed that among the thieves a cook named Bhola was an absent-minded fellow and others laughed at his cost. He went closer to Bhola and whispered, "Bhola, I'm afraid you've forgotten the word!"

"What do you think of me? Can't remember as simple a word as Dingding?" answered Bhola.

Needless to say, Bhim passed the test successfully.





"Come on, stranger, announce yourself to me. I promise in the name of our deity that no harm will be done to you. Otherwise I will find you out in the morning and kill you," said the chief loudly.

"I take your promise as word of honour. I am the outsider. I had taken shelter here before you came. I changed into your clothes and tried to pass on as one of you only because I wanted to share your food!"

declared Bhim.

The chief went closer to him and saw his face by raising the lamp high. He felt convinced that Bhim was no spy. He made Bhim sit by his side and fed him sumptuously. Early in the morning, when Bhim took leave of them, he offered him a purse of gold coins.

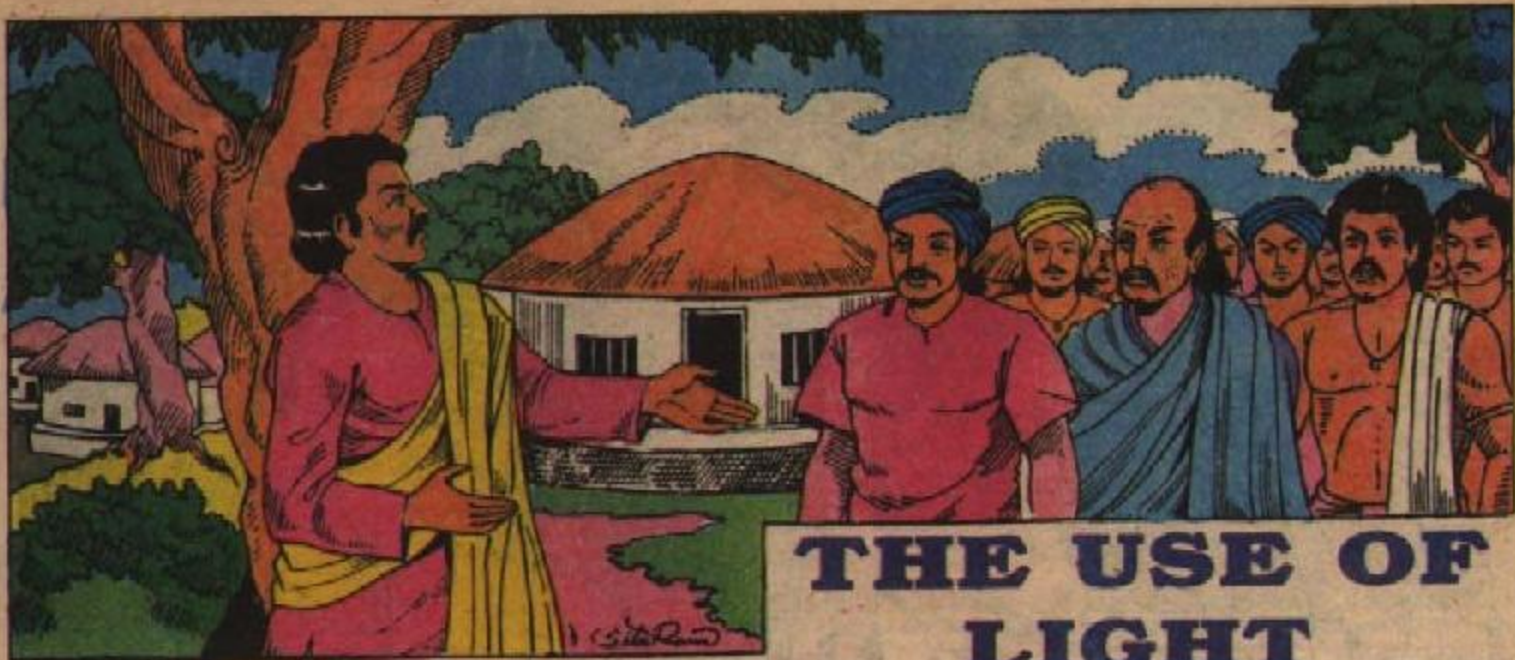
Bhim offered the coins to the village welfare fund because he would not like to use the stolen money on himself.

Ramgopal had a long check-up by the doctor. Then the doctor prescribed for him some medicines and said, "Why, are you looking so worried? I tell you, there is no cause for worry."

"Thank you, doctor, for telling me so, for I was worried about having to pay you your fee."







## THE USE OF LIGHT

**S**wami Sarvam was a learned scholar. He was the disciple of a famous Guru, Swami Shraddhananda. That is why, when he visited the village Somogram, the people of the village received him with great respect. The young Swami lectured to the villagers that evening. He explained many difficult problems of philosophy. People were impressed by his knowledge.

When he was about to retire to the Landlord's guest house, some of the villagers surrounded him and sought his advice on their problems. Somebody had a litigation hanging in the court; some one else found it difficult to marry off his daughter because he had no money; a third one could not find a cure for his ailment, so on and so forth.

This scholar heard them, but his patience ran out very soon. He showed signs of irritation. He did not care to answer the questions of the villagers.

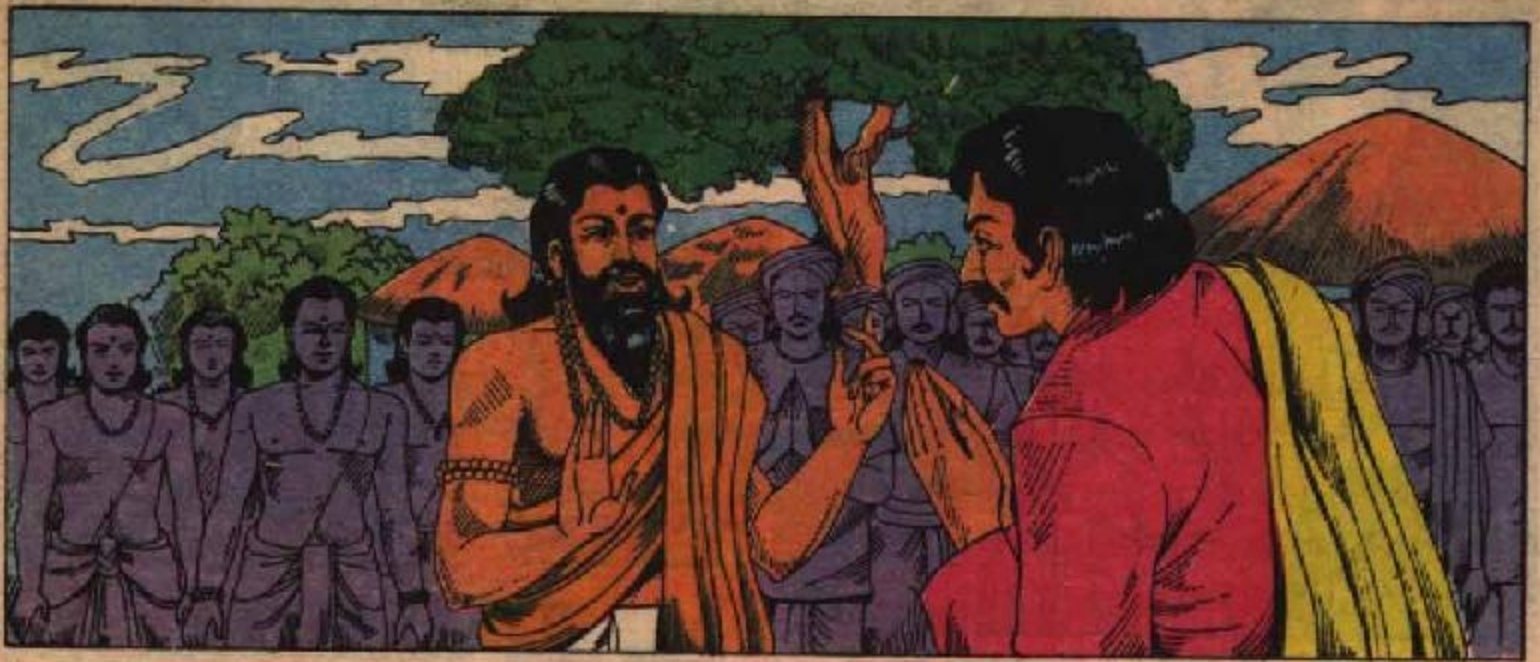
The villagers were disheartened. Privately they quoted their dissatisfaction to the Landlord.

"My dear fellows, your problems are quite worldly and petty. How can Swami Sarvam who always broods over great issues of philosophy and the scriptures care for them?" the Landlord told the villagers.

Early in the morning the Landlord went to greet the young scholar in his guest house. Looking at the scholar's eyes he guessed that the young man had not slept well. "Were you comfortable at night?" he asked the guest.

"How can I be comfortable?"





answered the guest with some irritation. "There were too many mosquitos in the room," said the guest.

The Landlord looked surprised. "Why, Sir, had not the caretaker of the guest house fixed a mosquito net on your bed?"

"He had. But one mosquito had somehow crept into the net. It kept on bothering me the whole night. There was no light, so I could not see it or kill it," said the scholar.

The Landlord nodded. "I thought so far as you are concerned, light is necessary only for the study of the scriptures

not for tracing petty mosquitoes. Now I realise that the same light which can be used for the study of scriptures can also be used for solving a small and practical problem like tracing a mosquito". In a grave tone he said again, "I am sure true spiritual knowledge can help us understand not only great issues but also some problems."

The Landlord went away. But the young scholar kept standing for a long time, thinking over the host's comment. That day in the evening he welcomed questions from the villagers. He reflected deeply on each question and answered them to their satisfaction.

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# WORLD OF SPORT



## **SPEED OF A GOLF BALL**

A GOLF BALL, WHEN DRIVEN OFF A TEE, TRAVELS AT A SPEED OF 170 M.P.H (273 KM/H)

## **THE LARGEST PITCH...**

THE LARGEST PITCH OF ANY BALL GAME IS THAT USED IN POLO. IT MEASURES 300 YDS LONG AND 200 YDS WIDE (274M x 182M)



## **SEVEN GOLD MEDALS...**

US SWIMMER MARK SPITZ WON NO FEWER THAN SEVEN GOLD MEDALS IN THE 1972 OLYMPICS.

THE SHORTEST TITLE FIGHT EVER, OCCURRED IN 1914 WHEN AL McCOY K.O'D GEORGE CHIP IN 45 SECONDS FOR THE MIDDLEWEIGHT TITLE IN NEW YORK.



## **THE SHORTEST TITLE FIGHT**



# WORLD OF NATURE

THE SPECTACLED BEAR OF SOUTH AMERICA IS SO CALLED BECAUSE OF ITS STRANGE FACE MARKINGS OF LIGHTER FUR THAT ENCIRCLE THE EYES. IT IS AN EXCELLENT TREE CLIMBER.

**What a spectacle**



## DANGER!

THE MOST DANGEROUS SPECIES OF JELLY FISH IS THE AUSTRALIAN BOX JELLY ALSO KNOWN AS THE SEA-WASP ITS 40 MILLION STINGING CELLS CAN KILL A MAN IN TWO OR THREE MINUTES.



CATERPILLARS HAVE ABOUT 2,000 MUSCLES IN THEIR BODIES, HUMANS HAVE ONLY 700.



**A  
MULTITUDE OF  
MUSCLES**



## FIVE BROTHERS AND A TYRANT

**T**here once lived on the coast of the China Sea an old woman with her five sons. The five brothers all looked alike. Even their mother would often mistake one for the other. They were known as the Len brothers.

Each of the five brothers had an extraordinary power. The eldest, Len I, could suck all the water from any lake into himself and blow it out whenever he wished. The second brother Len II, could step into a fire and not get burned. Len III could

stretch his legs for miles and miles. Len IV had a body of steel. The sharpest weapon could not pierce his skin. And the youngest brother, Len V, could speak and understand every animal language.

One day while Len V was listening to the tales of the animals, the king came to hunt in the forest. The king was a tyrant and his subjects were mortally frightened of him. Now the king was about to shoot at a deer when Len caught sight of him. "Run, danger," he shouted







in deer-language. In a wink the deer disappeared and warned all the other animals of the danger. The king was furious. He ordered his soldiers to capture Len and throw him into the cage of a famished tiger. But what a surprise! The tiger and Len chatted like two friends meeting after a long time. The king's face went beetroot-red. He ordered Len to be beheaded the next morning. But when the guards were sleeping Len IV exchanged places with the youngest.

Morning came. Len IV whose body was strong as steel was led to the block. At the king's

command, the executioner, with all his might, brought down the sword on Len's neck. But what a strange sight! The sword broke to pieces and Len stood smiling beside. The king screamed, "Throw the wretch down the highest cliff, tomorrow."

In the dead of the night, the third Len brother who could stretch his legs as long as necessary, secretly changed places with Len IV. Early next day Len III was led up the highest cliff and pushed down. But as he dropped, Len started stretching his legs till they touched the ground safely.

In a fit of rage the king began tearing his hair. "How can I get rid of this devil?" he screamed. His ministers thought for a while. They finally advised the king to burn Len alive.

While arrangements were being made for the burning, the Len brothers switched places without being noticed. Soon two guards led a whistling Len II to the public ground. There he was tied to a post and a great fire was lit. The flames rose high. Dark fumes spread making people cough. "Alas, the unfortunate one," cried a spectator. The





king laughed in glee. But his laughter was short-lived. For out of the drying fire came out a grinning Len. Not a single hair of his body had been burned.

"What a man!" cried the desperate king. "Tiger does not eat him, sword cannot kill him, thrown from a cliff he survives and now fire cannot burn him. What am I to do?" After a few minutes he exclaimed, "Tie a heavy stone around his neck and drown him where the lake is deepest. Nothing can save him this time!"

Meanwhile very cautiously the eldest Len exchanged places with his brother.

Two boats were ready to sail. One carried Len I and the soldiers who would throw him into the lake. In the other the king and his attendants followed. When they reached midlake,

the king ordered his men to throw Len overboard. The king felt much relieved now that he had at last got rid of Len.

But a strange thing started to happen. The water of the lake was fast disappearing into nowhere! Before long the boats touched the lake-bed.!

In the meantime the eldest Len, having sucked in the lake, unfastened the heavy stone around his neck and reached the shore. Without losing time he blew out all the water he was holding, back into the lake. In a twinkle the lake was full again. The ruthless king and his men struggled to come out of it, but failed.

The country was at last free from its tyrant king. People rejoiced and the Lens were honoured as no king had ever been.





## THE FAKIR AS THE PHYSICIAN

There was a king who ate and drank a lot and spent all his time merry-making. His only problem was, he had grown very fat.



There was a fakir who was believed to do miracles. The king requested him to make him slim. "My treatment takes a long time, and you have only six months more to live," said the fakir.



The king grew pensive. He gave up merry-making and spent his time fasting and praying. He was not interested in eating or drinking. After five months the fakir came to see him.



"O Fakir, bless me, for I'm to last only a month more," said the king. "You'll live long. You wished to become slim. You've become so. What I said was my way of treatment," explained the fakir.





## THE MAGIC BOTTLE

There once was a farmer named Peter, who rented an estate of ten acres on the outskirts of a town. He worked from morn till night but the land was barren. There was never enough food for his wife and children. And almost all his income went towards paying the rent.

That year, floods ruined his crops and Peter had no money to pay the rent. So he and his wife Joan decided to sell their only cow at the market in the

town.

One morning Peter set off with his cow to the market. On the moorland he met a dwarf with a yellow face. "Good morning," said the dwarf, "Could I please take a lift on your cow? You see, I've twisted my foot." Peter looking at his swollen ankle, then lifted the dwarf up and put him on the cow's back. On the way Peter told him that he was going to sell his cow at the market. The dwarf offered to buy the cow







and in return gave Peter a white bottle. At first, Peter was reluctant to exchange his cow for an empty bottle, but he consented at last, because he had a strong feeling that the dwarf was full of goodwill for him. Besides, the bottle looked quite extraordinary. The dwarf, before disappearing into the nearby forest, had instructed him to put the bottle on a clean floor and say, "Bottle, do your duty!"

Joan was angry when Peter returned home with an empty bottle. Still, they cleaned the house and set the bottle on a shining floor and said, "Bottle, do your duty."

In the twinkling of an eye, two little fellows jumped out of the bottle and covered the table with gold and silver plates and dishes of delicious food and choicest fruits. Peter, Joan and the children had the best meal of their life. Later, Peter sold away the gold and silver plates for bagfuls of money. He purchased a horse and a coach, cows and sheep and everything he had ever wanted. He became very rich.

News spread of the wonders of the white bottle and it reached the greedy landlord. One day, when Peter was away on some work, the landlord reached his house all of a sudden. Before Joan had any time to protect the bottle, he forcibly took it away.

Many months passed and Peter slowly became poor again. His bags once full of coins were empty. "If only I had another bottle!" thought he. So he set off towards the forest once again. Indeed, he chanced to see the yellow-faced dwarf again and mournfully told him his tale. The dwarf disappeared into his cottage and this time came out with a black bottle which he handed over to Peter.



Now, the watchful spies of the landlord reported to their master that Peter had happily emerged from the forest with yet another bottle tucked under his arm. Rumour was that the black bottle was better than the white one.

In all haste the landlord arranged a huge party and asked Peter to be his chief guest and to demonstrate the magic of his new bottle. When all the guests had come in, Peter took out the black bottle from under his coat, put it on the polished floor and said, "Bottle, do your duty!"

Out jumped two big monsters with maces and started beating the landlord.

"Call them off, please!" shrieked the landlord.

"Not until you give me back my white bottle," calmly said Peter.

The landlord handed the bottle back to Peter in a hurry. The monsters immediately disappeared into the black bottle. Peter soon became one of the richest men in the country. He buried the two bottles at a secret place because he had no longer any use for them.

—Retold by R. Meenaxi







## THE COURT-SINGER

**K**ing Mahendra Dev of Bhogapur once paid a visit to another kingdom. There he was entertained by the court-singers of his host.

Back at Bhogapur, he told his minister, "We should have a court-singer as other kings have."

"No problem, my lord, for we have a good number of singers in our kingdom," said the minister.

"Fine. Now, please summon a conference of our musicians. We will select the best one."

"Who will be the judge, my lord?"

"Myself, the queen and yourself," replied the king.

The minister nodded his consent. He knew that the king

loved good songs like any ordinary man, but the queen was a true critic of classical music.

All the gifted singers of the kingdom were summoned. The king, the queen and the minister sat listening to them for seven long days, for each singer was seen to sing several songs. A large number of invitees attended the conference.

After the conference, the three judges met.

"I'm sure, you'll agree with me that Sundar emerged as the best singer," the king said confidently.

"How can you be sure of that?" retorted the queen with a smile. "I'm sure, Kanthaswami was the best of the lot."

The king was surprised.



**"What is your judgement? Whom does it support?" he asked the minister.**

**"Neither, my lord. According to me the position of the court-singer should go to Puskar Verma.**

**"But wasn't Sundar most melodious?" asked the king.**

**"And didn't Kanthaswamy sing the most difficult Ragas in the correct way?" asked the queen.**

**"Both your observations are right," said the minister looking at the king and the queen. "Sundar and Kanthaswamy should receive royal patronage. They may be called to perform in the court to honour such guests who love music. But when it comes to appoint a court-singer, we should see to it**

**that the singer proves interesting to those who love classical music and those who love light music," explained the minister.**

**"How did you find out that Puskar Verma had the quality to satisfy both the kinds of listeners?" asked the king.**

**"While I was listening to the singers, I was also observing the reaction of the audience. Many of the lovers of classical music left the hall after listening to Sundar for an hour. Similarly, those who were not specially fond of classical music, left the hall when Kanthaswamy sang. But all sat absorbed when Puskar Verma sang," said the minister.**

**The king and the queen accepted the minister's judgement.**





## THE GOLDEN GOOSE

"Grandpa, the Chief Guest at the Annual Day ceremony of our college said that by demolishing the forest for setting up a factory we were going to kill the *golden goose*. What did he mean?" Reena asked Prof. Chowdhury.

"Why, Reena, haven't you ever heard the proverb *He killed the goose that laid the golden eggs*? According to a Greek legend, a man had a goose that laid golden eggs. The greedy fellow decided to dig out all the eggs the goose had inside it so that he could become very rich overnight. He killed the goose, but did not find a single egg. Similarly, the forests are all-time blessings for the earth. By destroying the forests for some immediate gain, we incur irreparable loss even if we derive some immediate benefit," explained Grandpa.

"And what is *Golden Fleece*, Grandpa?" asked Rajesh.

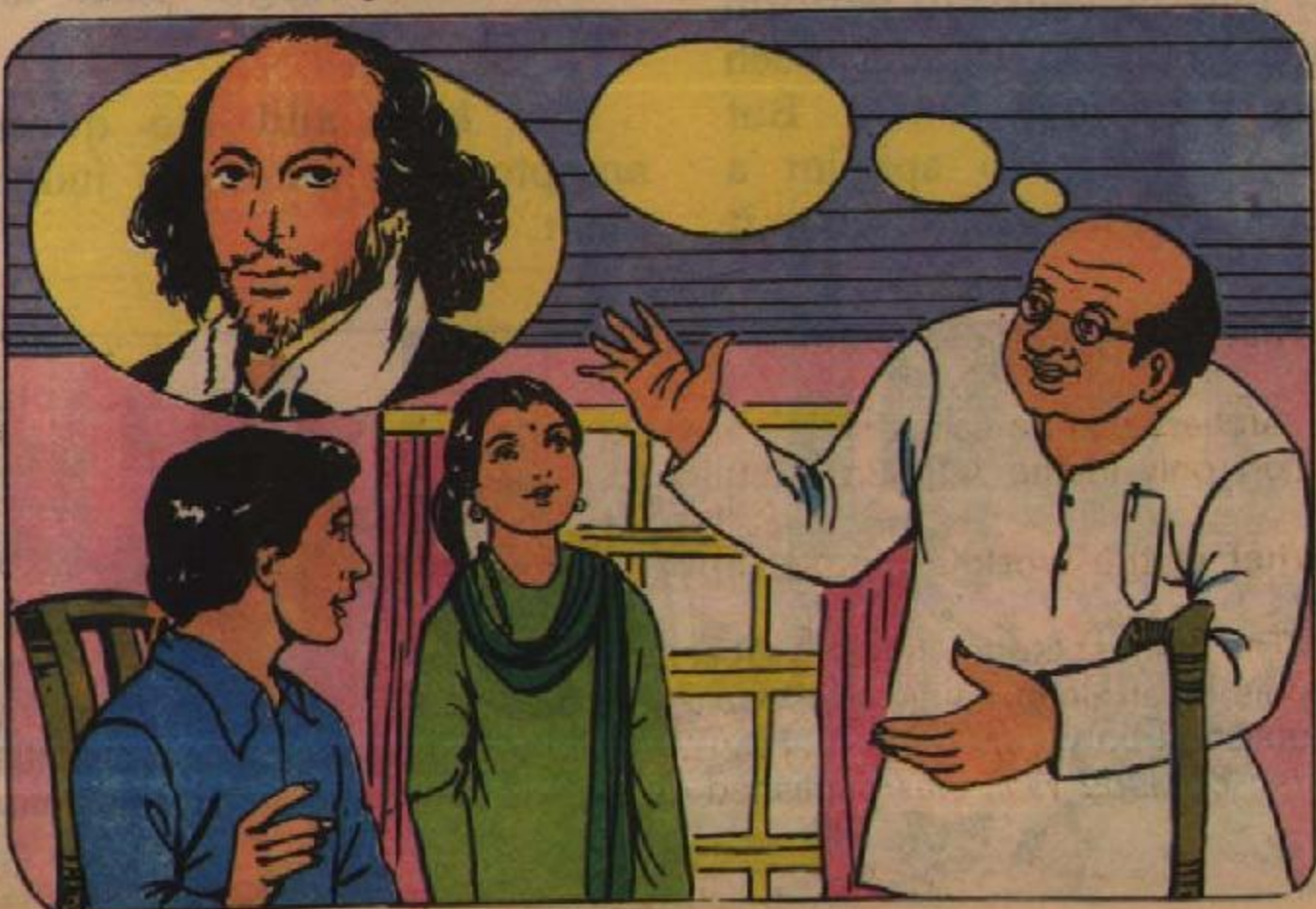
"That comes from yet another Greek legend. The Argonauts led an expedition to find the Golden Fleece hung on a sacred oak."

"Grandpa, of all the phrases and proverbs connected with gold the most popular one is *All that glitters is not gold*. Am I right?"

"Yes. That comes from the great Shakespeare. Well, do you know how many phrases Shakespeare has contributed to our daily vocabulary?"

"Please tell us, Grandpa!"

When we meet again. I'm in a hurry now







# LET US KNOW

**What are the books Jawaharlal Nehru wrote?**

—Giridhari Gupta, Basta.

*Autobiography, Glimpses of World History, and The Discovery of India* are his major works. His other works include, apart from the collection of his speeches, *India and the World, Unity of India and Independence and After.*

**Do snails multiply automatically?**

—Susanne Jesus and sisters, Bombay.

There is a kind of snail, *Paludestrina jenkinsi*, which reproduces itself parthenogenetically, that is to say, without fertilization. This kind is found in Great Britain.

**What is K. G. B.?**

—Vind, M., Bombay.

Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti or Russian Committee of State Security.

**What is the earliest game?**

—Rabi Majumdar, Calcutta.

Archery can be called the earliest game, though it became an organised sport only in the A.D. 3rd Century.

**What is the world's longest novel written so far?**

—Rosy Das, Kulu.

The longest literary novel is *Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté* in French by Louis Henri Jean Farigoule, popularly known as Jules Romains. This was published between 1932–1946 in 27 Volumes. Its English edition, entitled *Men of Good Will*, was published during the same period in 17 volumes.





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## PICKS FROM THE WISE

O Freedom, what liberties are taken in thy name!

—Daniel George.

History is too serious to be left to historians.

—Iain Macleod.

A small man can be just as exhausted as a great man.

—Arthur Miller.



**"It's true I recite slokas between deliveries. It's also true that I drink Maltova every day, twice a day so that I have the energy to attack the bowling!"**

— Star batsman **K. Srikkanth** on his secret strategy.

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I can still remember the day. And how excited I was. My elder sister's wedding was just a week away. So there I was trying on my new clothes before the mirror, when horror of horrors, I noticed something on my cheek ... a pimple. My very first pimple. My first thought was ... oh no, not now!

Just then my didi walked in and saw my face. She said "Arre pagli, everybody gets pimples at this age. I did too. And I used Clearasil. So should you." So I did. And guess what...it worked!

Now I don't need to tell you, I really enjoyed myself at the wedding.

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